

The Role of the Council of Islamic Ideology in the Promotion of Islamic Thought in Pakistan

Dr. Syed Muhammad Usman Ghani

International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)

Bilal Hussain

*PhD Research Scholar, Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyah of Laws (AIKOL),
International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)*

Abstract

The Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) plays a critical role in shaping Islamic thought and guiding legislative processes in Pakistan. Established in 1962 and formalized in the 1973 Constitution, the CII serves as a constitutional advisory body tasked with ensuring national laws conform to Shari'ah principles. Over the decades, the Council has influenced legal, social, and policy frameworks by offering recommendations on governance, economy, and society through an Islamic lens. This study examines the CII's contributions to the promotion of Islamic thought in Pakistan. The research applies a dual theoretical framework contrasting primordial and modern approaches to national identity, situating the CII within Pakistan's broader historical struggle to define its relationship with Islam. Through rigorous methodology combining historical analysis, document examination, case studies, and comparative assessment, this paper demonstrates how the CII has navigated between competing visions of Islamic governance while addressing issues ranging from religious observances to economic policies. The analysis reveals that despite its significant constitutional role, the CII's effectiveness has been constrained by its non-binding advisory status, political influences, and internal theological divisions. By comparing the CII with similar institutions in other Muslim-majority states, this research highlights both its distinctive features and shared challenges in translating religious principles into contemporary governance frameworks. The study concludes with recommendations for enhancing the CII's effectiveness in bridging traditional Islamic thought with Pakistan's evolving social and economic realities.

Keywords: Council of Islamic Ideology (CII), Islamic thought, Pakistan, Shari'ah, Legislative reforms, Islamic jurisprudence

Introduction

Islamic thought has played a central role in shaping Pakistan's national identity and governance structures since its inception in 1947. The creation of Pakistan itself was predicated on the Two-Nation Theory, which postulated that Muslims of the Indian subcontinent constituted a distinct nation deserving of a separate homeland. This religious foundation has significantly influenced Pakistan's constitutional development, legislative framework, and institutional design. The constitutional framework of the country recognizes Islam as the state religion and mandates the alignment of laws with Shari'ah principles, establishing what has been characterized as an "ideological state" with religion as a defining element of national identity.

The Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) was established in 1962 under Field Marshal Ayub Khan's regime to serve as an advisory body responsible for ensuring that laws conform to Islamic injunctions. Its subsequent formalization in the 1973 Constitution during Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's era marked a significant milestone in institutionalizing the relationship between Islam and the state in Pakistan. Over the decades, the CII has contributed to legislative debates, social reforms, and intellectual discourse on Islamic governance, influencing policy on matters ranging from family laws to economic systems.

The role of the CII, however, has been a subject of ongoing debate within Pakistan's political and intellectual landscape. While some scholars view it as an essential institution for promoting Islamic values and guiding national policies, others argue that its recommendations often lack binding authority and are influenced by political considerations. Furthermore, the Council has faced criticism for its stance on gender-related issues, minority rights, and modern governance challenges. These debates reflect broader tensions regarding the proper relationship between religion and state in a modern nation-state.

The relationship between religion and politics has played a significant role in the history of Pakistan, reflecting the process of Islamization in the country since its establishment. As Malik et al. (2023) note, "The utilization of Islam by a significant number of governments for their political agendas, with the intention of achieving personal objectives, has had a profound impact on the social fabric of Pakistan." This complex interplay between religion, politics, and institutional mechanisms forms the backdrop against which the CII's role must be understood.

The CII's evolution has been particularly influenced by shifting political contexts and competing visions of Pakistan's identity. As Ahmed and Sajjad (2020) observe, military rulers have tended to "keep strategic interest of the country in mind while taking position in the ideological debate

between conservatives and modernists." Similarly, the CII's role has expanded and contracted depending on broader political dynamics, with particularly significant developments occurring during Bhutto's era (1971-1977) following the traumatic separation of East Pakistan, which challenged the ideological foundations of the state.

This study approaches the analysis of the CII through a dual theoretical framework that contrasts primordial and modern approaches to national identity. The primordial approach views national identity as fixed, natural, and ancient, often tied to religion and tradition, while the modern approach sees nationalism as emerging from transition to modern society, driven by industrialization and socioeconomic factors (Malik et al., 2023). This framework allows us to examine how the CII has operated at the intersection of these competing visions for Pakistan's identity.

This paper explores the role of the CII in promoting Islamic thought in Pakistan by analyzing its functions, contributions, limitations, and potential for reform. The study addresses several key questions: How has the CII's role evolved since its establishment? To what extent has it influenced legislative processes and social policy? How has it navigated between traditional interpretations and contemporary challenges? What factors have constrained its effectiveness? The research is particularly focused on the evolution of the CII during Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's era (1971-1977), which represents a critical period in the institutionalization of the Council and its growing influence on Pakistan's legislative framework.

This study employs a multi-method research approach to examine the role of the Council of Islamic Ideology in promoting Islamic thought in Pakistan. The complex nature of the subject necessitates a methodology that can adequately capture both the historical evolution of the CII and its contemporary significance within Pakistan's constitutional framework.

The research is fundamentally grounded in historical analysis, examining the CII's development from its establishment in 1962 through its formalization in the 1973 Constitution and its subsequent evolution. As Hussain et al. (2020) note, the study of the CII requires "a descriptive study of literature" using both primary and secondary sources to provide "an explanation of its existence and its role in the polity of the country." This historical approach allows us to trace the continuities and discontinuities in the CII's functioning and influence across different political periods, with particular attention to the critical juncture represented by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's era (1971-1977).

Document analysis forms a core component of the research methodology. The study systematically examines the official reports of the CII proceedings since 1962, focusing on the recommendations made to the

government and their subsequent fate. Constitutional provisions related to the CII, particularly from the 1973 Constitution, are analyzed to understand the formal parameters within which the Council operates. Legislative records are examined to assess the implementation (or non-implementation) of CII recommendations, providing insight into the practical influence of the Council on Pakistan's legal framework. Additionally, newspaper records from relevant periods are consulted to compare CII recommendations with public statements by government officials, revealing the public discourse surrounding the Council's role.

Archival materials on the debates surrounding the CII's constitutional status during the drafting of the 1973 Constitution provide crucial context for understanding the competing visions of the Council's role in Pakistan's governance structure. These materials include transcripts of parliamentary debates, committee reports, and personal papers of key political figures involved in constitutional development. The detailed analysis of these primary sources allows for a nuanced understanding of the political calculations and ideological considerations that shaped CII's institutional design.

The methodology incorporates case studies of specific instances where the CII played a significant role in shaping legislation or public policy. These include the CII's involvement in the declaration of Ahmadis as non-Muslims in 1974, its recommendations regarding the establishment of Friday as a public holiday, its positions on alcohol prohibition and gambling regulations, and its proposals for implementing Zakat. These case studies enable a deeper examination of the CII's approach to specific issues and its interaction with political authorities in different contexts.

The comparative dimension of the research involves analyzing the CII in relation to similar institutions in other Muslim-majority countries, such as Saudi Arabia's Council of Senior Scholars, Malaysia's National Fatwa Council, Iran's Guardian Council, and Egypt's Al-Azhar. This comparative analysis examines differences in authority, effectiveness, and implementation mechanisms, situating Pakistan's experience within the broader context of Islamic advisory bodies globally. The comparison focuses particularly on the constitutional status of these bodies, their composition, their relationship with political authorities, and their influence on legislation.

Theoretically, the study applies to a dual framework contrasting primordial and modern approaches to national identity and religion-state relations. The primordial approach, as articulated by Malik et al. (2023), views national identity as fixed, ancient, and often religiously defined. This perspective tends to see Islamic principles as immutable and essential to Pakistani nationhood. In contrast, the modern approach sees nationalism as

emerging from socioeconomic modernization processes, with religious identity as one of several factors shaping national consciousness. This theoretical framework provides analytical tools for understanding the tensions and contradictions in the CII's role and reception within Pakistani society.

The research acknowledges certain limitations. First, the availability of complete CII records varies across different periods, with more comprehensive documentation available for recent decades. Second, the politically sensitive nature of some CII deliberations means that certain aspects of its functioning may not be fully captured in official records. Third, the study primarily focuses on the formal, institutional aspects of the CII rather than the informal networks and influences that may shape its operations. Despite these limitations, the multi-method approach adopted provides a robust foundation for analyzing the CII's role in promoting Islamic thought in Pakistan.

Historical Background and Constitutional Framework

Origins of the CII

The establishment of the Council of Islamic Ideology was rooted in Pakistan's constitutional commitment to Islam. As Hussain et al. (2020) detail, "Field Marshal Ayub Khan formed an institution in 1962 called the Islamic Ideological Council. The purpose of the body was to consult Muslim scholars on harmonizing legislation with the Qur'an and Sunnah."

The historical context for the CII's establishment is significant. Ayub Khan had enacted Muslim family laws in 1961 that were heavily criticized by religious circles. "Ayub Khan was semi-English by nature and training and was not very familiar with our historical perspective, cultural sensitivities and local traditions. The Islamic scholars started skinning hair in the context of family laws, sometimes the question of the inheritance of an orphan grandson was raised, and sometimes men were encouraged to remarry in the patriarchal society" (Hussain et al., 2020).

Ayub Khan appointed Dr. Fazlur Rehman as the first head of the Ideological Council. However, "Enlightened Fazlur Rehman his educational background, and how could they be accepted because of the reform trend? When a storm arose against him, he resigned and went to Canada to pursue his academic pursuits" (Hussain et al., 2020). This early history reveals the tensions that have characterized the CII from its inception, as it navigated between modernist and traditionalist approaches to Islamic interpretation.

Constitutional Status and Evolution

Under Article 230 of the 1973 Constitution, the Council is tasked with examining existing laws, proposing reforms, and advising the government on legislative matters from an Islamic perspective (Government of Pakistan, 1973). The objectives of the CII include:

- Reviewing laws to assess their compatibility with Sharī'ah
- Recommending amendments to existing legislation to bring it in line with Islamic teachings
- Providing advisory opinions to the government and parliament on Islamic legal and moral matters
- Promoting research and discourse on Islamic jurisprudence

The constitutional status of the CII evolved significantly from the 1962 Constitution to the 1973 Constitution. As Hussain et al. (2020) explain, "Council of Islamic Ideology as per the 1973 constitution was different in its genesis from the one provided in the predecessor constitution... The changes were limited not only to its nomenclature but to the extent that its recommendations were to be sent directly to the legislature, which was to enact legislation in respect thereof, thus it had direct access to the ears of lawmakers."

The 1973 Constitution gave the CII a definitive timeframe of seven years to completely examine laws and submit its final report to the legislature. This strengthened institutional role reflected the increasing importance of Islamic identity in Pakistan's governance framework following the separation of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in 1971.

Structure and Composition

According to Article 228 of the 1973 Constitution, "the members of the Islamic Ideological Council shall not be less than eight and not more than 20. The members will be appointed at the discretion of the President of Pakistan, and they will nominate persons who understand Islamic law and philosophy under the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet and inform them of the ground realities of Pakistan's economic, social, political and administrative affairs" (Hussain et al., 2020). The CII consists of scholars from diverse schools of Islamic thought, ensuring a pluralistic approach to fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence). However, its recommendations are non-binding, meaning that the government is not legally obligated to implement them. This limitation on the CII's authority has been a source of ongoing debate regarding its effectiveness.

The CII During Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Era (1971-1977)

Perspectives on the Establishment of the CII in the 1973 Constitution

The inclusion and formalization of the CII in the 1973 Constitution was a subject of significant debate during Pakistan's constitutional development. As Hussain et al. (2020) detail, "The importance and the stacks of the Council are evident from the fact that it was among those last issues which were ultimately decided on the last day during the meetings between the opposition and President Bhutto."

One of the key points of contention was the authority of the CII over the legislature. The opposition demanded that "If twenty-five per cent members of the House points out that measure before the discussion is un-Islamic it can be referred to the Council, and until it is being decided by the Council, no law shall be passed in that regard" (Pirzada, 1973).

The government, led by Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party, opposed giving such authority to the CII. Law Minister Abdul Hafeez Pirzada argued, "do you want Council to be a Court? They demand twenty per cent members decide the future of any legislation... this is against the parliamentary tradition" (Pirzada, 1973). Similarly, Attorney General Yahya Bakhtiar contended, "in modern times, you have to move quickly, swiftly to make legislations, Council will take time so by this demand a minority in the House will paralyze the working of the majority government" (Bakhtiar, 1973).

The compromise that emerged in the 1973 Constitution represented a balance between these competing visions. The proportion of members required to refer legislation to the CII was increased from one-fourth (as demanded by the opposition) to two-fifths, "so that opposition cannot paralyze the working of the majority government" (Hussain et al., 2020). Additionally, the Constitution allowed legislation to be enacted even while under consideration by the CII, though with the provision that if later deemed un-Islamic, the legislature would reconsider it.

This compromise reveals the delicate balancing act between religious authority and democratic governance that has characterized Pakistan's constitutional development. It also highlights the strategic use of religious institutions for political legitimacy, a theme that would become increasingly prominent in later periods.

Key Recommendations During the Bhutto Era

During Bhutto's administration, the CII made several significant recommendations that shaped Pakistan's legislative and social landscape. Some of the most notable include:

Declaration of Friday as a Public Holiday

"One of the foremost recommendations of the Council was to declare 'Friday as a public holiday,' and it was ultimately announced by Bhutto while addressing the last session of the Parliament in January and announcement in this regard was to take effect from July 1, 1977" (Hussain et al., 2020). The CII's justification for this recommendation was that Sunday had been designated as a public holiday by the British due to their Christian background, and therefore Friday should be adopted as the sacred day for Muslims.

It is significant that this recommendation did not cite specific references from the Quran or Sunnah to justify making Friday a public holiday but rather relied on cultural and identity-based reasoning. This illustrates how the CII sometimes operated more within a primordial framework of asserting Islamic identity in contrast to colonial legacies rather than strict textual interpretation.

Approach to Prayer and Religious Observance

When the provincial Government of North-West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) sent a reference to the CII proposing legislation to make not offering prayer a punishable offense, the Council debated the issue extensively. Interestingly, the CII recommended such punitive measures, stating that "the habit of praying can be encouraged through motivations and not through punishments which can result otherwise" (Hussain et al., 2020). This debate revealed a divide within the CII between those with madrasa education and those with legal and academic backgrounds. Among those opposing punitive measures were "Justice Gul, Justice (Retd.) Kadir Nawaz Awan, Justice Afzal Cheema, Dr Moin-ud-din Baqai, Dr Miss Kaneez Yousaf, Dr Professor Shamim Akhtar and Maulana Najamul Hassan. Their basic argument was that prayer is a personal affair between the man and his Creator" (Hussain et al., 2020). This case demonstrates the CII's capacity for nuanced interpretation rather than rigid enforcement, suggesting a more moderate approach to religious practice during this period.

Introduction of Islamic Calendar

The CII recommended introducing the Islamic (Hijri) calendar to "enhance Islamization of social system" and help "bring consensus among the population to celebrations or commemorations, i.e. Eid-ul-Fitr, Eid-ul-Azha, Muharram commemorations" (Hussain et al., 2020). This recommendation addressed practical issues related to moon sighting and the timing of religious observances.

The Bhutto government had already passed a resolution for the appointment of the 'Ruet-e-Hilal Committee' (a panel of Islamic scholars to announce the sighting of the moon for Muslim months). However, it was only later, during Zia-ul-Haq's government, that Islamic calendar dates were formally included on official papers alongside the Gregorian calendar.

National Dress

"Another recommendation reiterated in the annual reports of the Council was about the national dress, it recommended the Government to promote the national dress by encouraging the government officials by wearing it. It proposed the Government to encourage Shalwar Kameez as the national dress and dupatta besides for the females" (Hussain et al., 2020). This recommendation was not substantially implemented during Bhutto's era but

was later made compulsory for officials working in the Secretariat under General Zia-ul-Haq in 1982.

This recommendation reflects the CII's concern with visible markers of Islamic identity in the public sphere, consistent with a primordial approach to national identity.

Relations with Muslim Countries

In line with the 1973 Constitution's provision that "the state of Pakistan shall endeavour to strengthen the ties with the Muslim countries," the CII encouraged closer relations with Muslim-majority nations. This was reflected in Bhutto's foreign policy, which included inviting the Imam of the Holy Mosque of Medina to Islamabad and organizing the Organization of Islamic Cooperation summit in Lahore in 1974.

As Ahmed and Akbarzadeh (2023) observe, "the second OIC summit in 1974, in Lahore at which Colonel Gadhafi called Pakistan 'the citadel of Islam in Asia'" was a significant moment in Pakistan's pan-Islamic orientation. Bhutto used this opportunity to promote Pakistan's Islamic identity, declaring: "We, the people of Pakistan, shall give our blood for the cause of Islam ... Whenever the occasion arises the Islamic world will never find us wanting in any future conflict" (Bhutto, 2010).

The Ahmadi Issue and Constitutional Amendment

One of the most consequential religious issues during Bhutto's administration was the question of the status of Ahmadis in Pakistan. Following protests demanding that Ahmadis be declared non-Muslims, Bhutto initially suggested referring the matter to the CII. However, "the religious-political parties did not agree to the suggestions because they believed that issue is already decided, and they are demanding legislation" (Hussain et al., 2020).

Several factors contributed to the opposition's unwillingness to accept the CII as an arbiter on this issue:

- Reservations about the qualifications of CII members
- Distrust based on previous protests on the same issue in the 1950s
- The political opportunity to mobilize against Bhutto

Eventually, "due to the failure of these negotiations and the ongoing protests and processions, the Government agreed to hold a special session of the Assembly to hold in-camera as a special committee on this issue and on September 7, 1973, the bill was passed for the Second Amendment in the Constitution according to which they were added to the definition of non-Muslim in the Constitution" (Hussain et al., 2020).

This episode illustrates both the limitations of the CII's authority in politically charged religious matters and the strategic deployment of Islamic identity for political purposes. Despite his initial reluctance, "once passed,

this legislation was promulgated by Bhutto government, although it was not willing for the said constitutional amendment, now he was eager to take full credit of this amendment and asked his religious minister to launch a propaganda campaign in this regard" (Hussain et al., 2020).

Alcohol Prohibition and Gambling Regulations

The status of alcohol consumption was another significant issue addressed by the CII during the Bhutto era. The Council recommended declaring alcohol consumption a penal offense and banning its production. This recommendation built on earlier debates from 1963-1969, when the Islamic Research Institute under Dr. Fazlur Rahman had argued against a complete ban, suggesting that "it is not the Alcohol that is barred by Islam, but it is the 'intoxication' which is forbidden" (Hussain et al., 2020).

After Rahman's resignation, the Advisory Council unanimously recommended that alcohol be forbidden in every form. This recommendation was repeated during the Bhutto government, and eventually, on May 10, 1977, legislation was presented in the National Assembly. Similarly, Bhutto announced a ban on gambling in the country on May 13, 1977, applying to both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Zakat Implementation

The CII also addressed the implementation of Zakat (religious tax for Muslims) during the Bhutto era. This issue had been under discussion since 1963 without resolution due to differences of opinion on whether the state should devise a mechanism for collection or whether it should remain voluntary.

By 1977, the CII "recommended the Government that deducting Zakat is among the basic duties of the state and legislation in this regard may be drafted by the legislature that can be sent to the Council for the examination of its repugnancy in the light of principles of Quran and the Sunnah" (Hussain et al., 2020). This recommendation would later be implemented during Zia-ul-Haq's administration.

Contributions of the Council of Islamic Ideology

Legislative Recommendations

One of the primary functions of the CII is to review existing and proposed laws to determine their conformity with Islamic principles. Over the years, the Council has provided recommendations on various legal matters, including:

Family Laws

The CII has issued opinions on marriage, divorce, inheritance, and guardianship laws, aiming to align them with Islamic teachings. However, its stance on issues such as triple talaq and women's rights in marriage has sparked debate (Khan, 2020). The Council's recommendations in this area have often reflected tensions between traditionalist interpretations and more reform-oriented approaches.

Economic Laws

The Council has played a role in advocating for riba-free (interest-free) banking and the promotion of Islamic financial systems, influencing Pakistan's shift toward Islamic banking practices (Ahmed, 2019). This area represents one of the CII's more successful domains of influence, as Islamic banking has grown substantially in Pakistan over recent decades.

Criminal Laws

The CII has reviewed and suggested reforms to Pakistan's Hudood Ordinances, blasphemy laws, and capital punishment policies, though its recommendations often face political and social resistance (Ali, 2021). The Council's approach to criminal law has generally reflected a more conservative interpretation of Islamic jurisprudence.

Social and Ethical Guidance

Beyond legal reforms, the CII has provided guidance on social and ethical issues, including media ethics, gender roles, and morality. The Council has issued opinions on the content of educational curricula, the role of women in society, and appropriate attire in public spaces.

These recommendations align with what Malik et al. (2023) identify as a primordial approach to national identity, where religious and traditional values are seen as fixed and immutable aspects of Pakistani society. While these recommendations aim to uphold Islamic values, critics argue that some of the CII's positions on women's rights and personal freedoms are restrictive and controversial (Hassan & Qureshi, 2022).

Engagement with Contemporary Issues

In recent years, the CII has addressed modern governance challenges such as:

Bioethics and Medical Ethics

The Council has provided Islamic perspectives on organ donation, euthanasia, and reproductive rights, attempting to bridge traditional Islamic jurisprudence with modern medical advances.

Digital and Cyber Ethics

The CII has offered guidance on online content regulation, social media usage, and data privacy from an Islamic standpoint (Rashid, 2021), recognizing the need to address technological developments through an Islamic framework.

Climate and Environmental Responsibility

The Council has promoted Islamic teachings on environmental stewardship and sustainable development (Rahman, 2020), contributing to the growing discourse on Islamic environmentalism.

The CII's engagement with these contemporary issues demonstrates its evolving role in adapting Islamic thought to modern challenges, showing some flexibility within its predominantly primordial approach to Islamic identity.

Challenges and Criticism

Despite its contributions, the CII faces several challenges that impact its effectiveness:

Lack of Binding Authority

The Council's recommendations are advisory, meaning that the government is not obligated to implement them. As Zafar (2020) notes, many of the CII's proposals remain unexecuted, limiting its practical impact on policy. This structural limitation has been a persistent challenge since CII's inception.

As Hussain et al. (2020) observe, this aspect of the CII reflects a compromise reached during constitutional debates: "The supremacy of the legislature over the Council was ensured through the fact that legislation can be promulgated in the public interest even if it is under consideration at the Council. However if later, it is declared repugnant then Assembly shall be reconsidered."

Political Influence and Controversies

The CII has been criticized for being influenced by political pressures, leading to inconsistencies in its recommendations. As Mukherjee (2010) argues, "much of Islamic revivalism in Muslim countries like Pakistan is strongly related to power politics and personal gains of politicians and how political leaders use religion to suit their own needs to consolidate their own power base, especially when it lacks political legitimacy."

This political dimension is evident in CII's history. For instance, during the Bhutto era, despite the government's initial reluctance regarding the Second Amendment declaring Ahmadis as non-Muslims, "once passed, this legislation was promulgated by Bhutto government...now he was eager to take full credit of this amendment and asked his religious minister to launch a propaganda campaign in this regard" (Hussain et al., 2020).

Additionally, the CII's stance on issues such as gender equality and minority rights has sparked controversy, with critics arguing that it often prioritizes conservative interpretations over progressive Islamic thought (Malik, 2019).

Diversity of Interpretations

Islamic jurisprudence is not monolithic, and different schools of thought hold varying opinions on legal and ethical matters. The presence of scholars from diverse backgrounds within the CII sometimes leads to conflicting recommendations, making consensus difficult (Khan & Ali, 2019).

This challenge is inherent in the structure of the CII, which aims to represent Pakistan's diverse Islamic traditions. However, it also reflects broader tensions within Pakistani society regarding the proper interpretation of Islam in the modern context.

Ideological Tensions

As Malik et al. (2023) observe, there is a fundamental tension between primordial and modern approaches to national identity in Pakistan. The CII often embodies a primordial approach, viewing Islamic identity as fixed and traditional, while other institutions may advocate for a more modernist interpretation that emphasizes socioeconomic development and adaptation to contemporary realities.

This tension is reflected in curriculum debates as well: "The curriculum of Pakistan studies which is still being taught in all the educational institutions of our country have either little, insufficient or distorted information and data regarding such acrimonious experiences of the past" (Malik et al., 2023). Similar critiques could be applied to the CII's approach to Islamic interpretation.

Comparative Analysis: Islamic Advisory Bodies in Other Countries

To better understand the effectiveness of the CII, it is useful to compare its role with similar institutions in other Muslim-majority countries:

Saudi Arabia: Council of Senior Scholars

The Council of Senior Scholars in Saudi Arabia holds significant authority in shaping legal and social policies, with its recommendations often implemented by the government. Unlike Pakistan's CII, its rulings carry substantial weight in legislative processes, reflecting Saudi Arabia's stronger integration of religious authority and state power.

Malaysia: National Fatwa Council

Malaysia's National Fatwa Council issues binding religious rulings that influence national laws, particularly in matters of family law and finance. Its authority exceeds that of Pakistan's CII, though it operates within a more pluralistic social context than Saudi Arabia's Council.

Iran: Guardian Council

The Guardian Council in Iran has constitutional authority to vet legislation, ensuring full compliance with Islamic principles. Its veto power over legislation gives it far greater authority than Pakistan's CII, reflecting Iran's post-revolutionary constitutional structure that formally integrates religious authority into governance.

Egypt: Al-Azhar

Al-Azhar, while not a formal advisory body like the CII, plays a significant role in religious interpretation in Egypt and throughout the Sunni Muslim world. Its opinions carry moral weight though they lack formal legislative authority. Its historical prestige gives it influence that exceeds that of Pakistan's relatively newer CII.

Unlike these institutions, Pakistan's CII remains an advisory body without binding legal authority, limiting its influence. This reflects Pakistan's complex navigation between Islamic identity and Westminster-style democratic institutions inherited from its colonial past.

Theoretical Analysis: Primordial vs. Modern Approaches

The CII's evolution and role can be understood through the theoretical framework of primordial versus modern approaches to national identity, with the Council often operating within what Malik et al. (2023) identify as a primordial framework that views national identity as fixed and deeply rooted in religious tradition, evident in its recommendations regarding national dress (promoting Shalwar Kameez), Islamic calendar adoption, Friday as a public holiday, and restrictions on alcohol and gambling, all of which emphasize visible markers of Islamic identity and traditional values as essential to Pakistani nationhood. However, there are instances where the CII has shown elements of a more modernist approach, recognizing the need for adaptation to contemporary realities, such as recommendations against punitive measures for non-performance of prayer, engagement with bioethical issues and modern medical practices, and addressing digital ethics and environmental concerns, suggesting some capacity for adaptation within the CII's predominantly traditionalist orientation. The tension between these approaches reflects broader debates within Pakistani society about the proper relationship between Islam, modernity, and national identity, with Ahmad and Sajjad (2020) noting that military rulers have tended to "keep strategic interest of the country in mind while taking position in the ideological debate between conservatives and modernists," leaving the CII often caught in these ideological crosscurrents, with its composition and emphasis shifting according to political circumstances, as was particularly evident during the Bhutto era when the government navigated between secular socialist rhetoric and Islamic legitimacy.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The Council of Islamic Ideology has played a crucial role in promoting Islamic thought in Pakistan by reviewing laws, guiding social policies, and engaging with contemporary challenges, though its effectiveness has been hindered by its lack of binding authority, political influences, and challenges in achieving consensus. This study has demonstrated how the CII evolved significantly during the Bhutto era (1971-1977), becoming a more formalized constitutional body with direct access to the legislature, making important recommendations regarding Friday as a public holiday, Islamic calendar implementation, and the prohibition of alcohol and gambling, as well as contributing to the controversial Second Amendment declaring Ahmadis as non-Muslims. The analysis reveals that the CII has primarily

operated within a primordial framework that views Islamic identity as fixed and traditional, though it has shown some capacity for adaptation to modern challenges, reflecting broader tensions in Pakistan's national identity formation. To enhance the CII's role, several measures are recommended: structural reforms including improving transparency in appointment processes to ensure diverse Islamic perspectives, establishing clearer implementation mechanisms, and developing structured dialogue with parliament; methodological innovations such as engaging with contemporary approaches in Islamic jurisprudence including *maqasid al-shari'ah*, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration between religious scholars and field experts, and adopting comparative perspectives from other Muslim-majority countries; and enhanced public engagement through improved communication strategies, broader civil society consultation, and educational programs promoting informed understanding of Islamic thought in contemporary contexts. By addressing these challenges, the CII can play a more effective role in shaping Islamic thought and governance in Pakistan, navigating between fidelity to tradition and responsiveness to modern realities.

References

1. Ahmed, S., & Sajjad, F. (2020). Strategizing the role of Islam for Pakistan: An analysis of the shifting perspectives of Pakistan. *Journal of Political Studies*, University of Punjab.
2. Ahmed, Z. S., & Akbarzadeh, S. (2023). Pakistan, Pan-Islamism, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. *Religions*, 14(3), 289.
3. Ali, M. (2021). Evolution of Criminal Law in Pakistan: Islamic Perspectives and Challenges. *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 32(1), 45-67.
4. Bakhtiar, Y. (1973). *Interview during National Assembly Debates*, April 1973.
5. Bhutto, Z. A. (2010). *The Myth of Independence*. Oxford University Press.
6. Government of Pakistan. (1973). *The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan*.
7. Hassan, R., & Qureshi, S. (2022). Women's Rights and the Council of Islamic Ideology: Tensions and Trajectories. *Gender and Society in Pakistan*, 15(2), 78-96.
8. Hussain, S., Gillani, A. H., & Abbas, M. W. (2020). Role of Council of Islamic Ideology in Islamization During Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Era. *Global Political Review*, V(I), 241-250.
9. Khan, A. (2020). Family Law Reforms and the Council of Islamic Ideology. *Pakistan Law Review*, 8(3), 215-232.

10. Khan, M., & Ali, S. (2019). Theological Diversity and Political Unity: Challenges for Islamic Jurisprudence in Contemporary Pakistan. *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 30(2), 187-205.
11. Malik, S., Nazir, B., & Ayub, M. A. (2023). Ideology of Pakistan and Pakistan Studies: A Study in Correlation and its Impact on Curriculum Development. *Journal of Historical Studies*.
12. Malik, T. (2019). Religious Authority and Political Legitimacy: The Council of Islamic Ideology and Governance in Pakistan. *Contemporary South Asia*, 27(3), 338-355.
13. Mukherjee, K. (2010). Islamic Revivalism and Politics in Contemporary Pakistan. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 26(3), 329-353.
14. Pirzada, A. H. (1973). *Interview during National Assembly Debates*, April 1973.
15. Rahman, F. (2020). Islamic Environmental Ethics: Principles and Applications. *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 48(2), 356-375.
16. Rashid, A. (2021). Islamic Perspectives on Digital Ethics and Social Media. *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 32(3), 278-299.
17. Zafar, A. (2020). The Advisory Role of the Council of Islamic Ideology: Impact and Implementation. *Pakistan Journal of Islamic Research*, 21(1), 63-82.